

# ***LESSONS LEARNED***

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Neither the *Road Crew* statewide project team nor community leaders fully grasped the enormity of what communities were being asked to do in the course of one year until the process of putting the projects together began. Communities were expected to launch and staff a new business and develop a new product, all on a shoestring budget and within a short period of time. They were challenged to develop a marketing position and brand with no prior marketing experience. In addition, they were asked to build a community coalition representing a variety of local interests to steer the effort, to raise visibility and awareness of this new service, and to become self-sustaining. Two of the four grant recipients managed to clear those hurdles and are beginning a second year of service, all without further government support. A third community operated with success during the first year, but may not sustain itself into the future.

This narrative describes the process and components involved in launching these complex projects, addressing what worked and what didn't, and detailing many of the discoveries made along the way. It begins by looking back at the research that preceded NHTSA funding and outlines the technical assistance provided to demonstration communities. It lays out a program model of public/private partnership in community coalitions and looks at how social marketing concepts and applications worked to cover launching a service business. Finally, it concludes with community overviews, including plans to sustain efforts.

## **Background**

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***“If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you always gotten.”***

Some health and public safety issues seem intractable, some diseases incurable. But if policymakers are open to experimentation, new solutions will inevitably emerge. Although *Road Crew* participants don't claim to have found an easily replicable solution to preventing the often-fatal alcohol-related crashes that so commonly befall rural highways across Wisconsin and the United States, this demonstration project does provide a glimpse at results that indicate a new approach to wrestling this seemingly unconquerable malady.

In four rural communities, civic leaders, tavern owners and their young patrons, designed programs to meet the needs of their communities. The result is a potential 17% reduction in the number of alcohol-related crashes in those areas. How? By implementing ride programs. Almost 20,000 rides were provided to would-be drunk drivers and the possible instigators of automobile crashes. Perhaps just as importantly as the number of lives saved is the awareness that alcohol-related crashes can be tempered and communities empowered to find their own workable solutions.

Among the most difficult of public health issues to address are those rooted in behavior and culture. Drinking and driving in rural Wisconsin is just such an issue. There are deep cultural roots to imbibing linked to the state's northern European immigrant heritage. Over the past century, immigrant brew masters built an economic and cultural force, establishing hundreds of breweries and taverns across the state. Towns centered around two cultural institutions: the church and the tavern. While only a few

breweries remain, the Wisconsin tavern culture is alive and well, with taverns lining main streets of hundreds of small towns and rural intersections.

This is where adults meet and mingle. For the small community, taverns are often the center of social life. In the summer, taverns sponsor softball leagues, in the winter dart leagues. Fifty-two weekends a year, taverns offer a place for friends to gather and gab and have a few drinks.

## **RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE BASE**

The Road Crew project is built on a research and knowledge base that examines how 21-to-34-year-old single men behave and asks how a system can be designed to curb driving after excessive drinking. This target was defined as such because statistically it accounts for a disproportionate number of alcohol-related crashes. The project design is based on empirical evidence of 21-to-34-year-old single men defined in anthropological and psychological terms. Developmentally, psychologists concur that adolescent behavior is prolonged in men not involved in well-developed relationships. These individuals have yet to experience the domesticating influence and responsibilities that accompany wives and children. They engage in riskier behavior than most adults and are influenced to conform to peer norms and expectations, including heavy drinking and driving under the influence. They are more apt to drive home no matter what their blood alcohol level.

## **VALUE OF THE VEHICLE**

A significant finding in early research underscored the difficulty of convincing a young man to accept a ride home, leaving his car, truck, or SUV behind. For most young men, the vehicle is sacrosanct. It is their single largest investment and source of pride. Anthropologists and marketing experts alike purport that the vehicle has much to reveal about one's identity, values, and personal interests.

In a small town, where everyone knows who owns what vehicle, the automobile can reveal its owner's secrets. Leaving it in the parking lot and hitching a ride home sounds an alarm to everyone in town on matters that might not sit so well in the harsh light of day: his buddies might razz him for needing a ride home, his mom's best friend comment she saw his car in the bar parking lot Sunday morning; again. It's also true that in many communities, vehicles left unattended overnight can be ticketed or damaged by another drunk driver.

In addition to worrying about the ramifications of leaving vehicles behind and accepting a ride home, research revealed that deep inside these same young men, who appear to themselves to never be too drunk to drive, there are nagging concerns about car crashes, the cost of OWI convictions, repercussions on car insurance rates, job security, and the social shame within the extended multi-generational network of their community.

## **MODELING A NEW PRODUCT APPROACH**

While other approaches to removing intoxicated drivers from the road have had limited success, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to solving this problem. Over the years, social engineers have tried a variety of approaches, such as designated driver promotions. In focus groups with this project's target, researchers concluded that for a majority of young men, only two probable possibilities for naming a designated driver existed, including:

1. The least intoxicated person drives everyone home.
2. Someone's sober girlfriend drives her boyfriend and his friends home.

Asking a young man to not drink or to drink less does not work.

Another well-meaning strategy is to offer free cab rides to patrons who are both too drunk to drive, and too drunk to offer resistance to taking a cab home. In the culture of “being able to hold your liquor,” being forced to take a cab home is often seen more as a humiliation than as prudent. This taboo means that many young men, able to turn the key in the ignition but too inebriated to drive responsibly, set off on long rides home at high speeds on winding, rural highways. In addition, these men need their vehicles the next morning, so they are reluctant to leave them behind at the end of the evening.

Research that preceded the *Road Crew* demonstration project launch included two sets of statewide focus groups. Eleven focus groups were conducted in the first set, which took place in bars and taverns. Researchers asked the target group, 21-to-34-year-old men, why they drank and drove and invited them to brainstorm ideas about alternative ways to getting home.

In the second set of focus groups, consisting of seven groups, researchers asked identical questions to expert observers, those who regularly interact with this cohort when they have had too much to drink. This included bar owners and servers, public health workers, EMS personnel, and law enforcement officials. Researchers then applied what they learned from the two sets of focus groups to what research in the behavioral sciences, including social psychology and marketing, had found motivated this group to action.

## **LAUNCHING A SOCIAL MARKETING DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

The goal was to shape what was learned in the focus group research into alternative ride program that would be a learning laboratory, a place that encouraged experimentation within the community to find ways to reducing driving after drinking. The *Road Crew* demonstration project emerged from this research, using social marketing techniques to develop an environmental change that addressed the objections the target had voiced about existing options.

Social marketing seeks to apply commercial marketing techniques to social issues. Just as commercial marketers use a combination of a desirable product, favorable pricing, easy availability, incentives, and messages to persuade consumers to try their products, social marketers attempt to influence individuals to change their social behavior. Marketers succeed by providing greater benefits to the target than can be given by the alternative choice, and by reducing the barriers that keep the target from selecting the desired choice.

## **The Communities**

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When the opportunity arose for WisDOT/BOTS to apply for the NHTSA grant, a core group of WisDOT safety experts had its preliminary research in hand. With implementation of the *Road Crew* project, four communities became pioneers in applying social marketing concepts to a crucial community safety issue: alcohol-related crashes involving 21-to-34-year-old drivers.

Four communities participated in the NHTSA-funded *Road Crew* demonstration project. To change behavior, communities provided appealing new alternative forms of transportation both to and from drinking establishments. To encourage participation, communities developed programs that fit the community’s drinking patterns and were fun and hassle-free. Three out of four grant sites succeeded in providing this service in the first year of the project. Complete overviews of each community are found in Appendix D. Here are brief snapshots of those communities.

### **THE ROAD CREW PARTY BARGE, POLK COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

Managed by the Polk County Tavern League, older limousines provide the basis for a fun, upscale, and funky way to make stops between the numerous small bars, as well as offer a safe and economical way to get home at the end of the evening. Limos, staffed by professional drivers and dispatched from a central point, allow groups of up to a dozen people to bar hop. It's not uncommon to have groups sign up for an entire evening, including home pick-up and drop-off.

### **DODGE-POINT ROAD CREW, DODGEVILLE AND MINERAL POINT, WISCONSIN**

Dodgeville and Mineral Point are approximately eight miles apart from one another. There was a steady flow of traffic between these two larger communities and several smaller communities by members of the target group. There are five vehicles in the Dodge-Point *Road Crew* fleet: two 6-passenger limos and one 10-passenger limo accommodating large groups, a Cadillac Sedan, and a Lincoln Town Car Sedan. A team of 80 volunteer drivers staffs the program.

### **“TAKE A CAB ON OUR TAB” ROAD CREW, TOMAH WISCONSIN**

The goal of this project was to induce the target group to use an already well-established, low-cost cab service. The program offered subsidized rides after 5 p.m., seven days a week, primarily within Tomah city limits. Riders using the program were offered \$2 off their fare on rides home; those requesting rides to a bar received coupons for \$2 off the price of food or games at participating establishments. Either riders or wait staff could call the cab companies for rides.

### **MANITOWOC COUNTY ROAD CREW, MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN**

This program was in operation from late November 2002 until New Years Eve 2002. The plan at that time was to augment a Safe Ride program already in place. There were numerous factors that contributed to the demise of this effort, but the major problems were at the administrative level. There was both a lack of trust and respect between project leadership and the primary vendor, and a lack of political support at the county level to encourage this pilot project to proceed.

## **Coalitions**

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Collaboration among state and local level stakeholders is the foundation upon which the *Road Crew* model is built. These *Road Crew* coalitions:

- Brought together stakeholders who may not naturally work together. Many public and private partners came together to think through the details of working together, all with varied skills and perspectives.
- Focused on the shared problem of increasing highway safety, while overlooking potentially different realms of self-interest that might distract from the highway safety goal.

### **PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AT THE STATE LEVEL**

A partnership of transportation safety specialists, academics, and commercial partners was put in place. WisDOT/BOTS led this team, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin School of Business, MasComm Associates, LLC, Miller Brewing Company, and the Tavern League of Wisconsin.

***Lesson Learned: All partners agreed that to be able to collaborate, the initiative would focus solely on the behavior of driving after excessive alcohol consumption.*** This project was developed to increase highway safety by reducing alcohol-related crashes. It would not have succeeded if the (also important) goal of reducing alcohol consumption had been pursued. It is important to stay focused on a single narrow objective, as it is easy to be distracted so that different and/or less important goals are pursued.

Understanding that the target's social life often revolves around drinking, communities were convinced that trying to focus on reducing consumption would undermine the goal of increasing highway safety. Using a core marketing principle – selling a positive – the state team understood that if the target group was made to feel badly or shamed about drinking, they would feel humiliated and not buy into using the project's services. This agreement made the initiative more difficult to explain to public health practitioners who work to mitigate a wider range of social ills associated with excess alcohol consumption, but it helped in enlisting the support of local taverns essential to the success of the effort. Without all of the members of the state team transmitting their explicit endorsement of the *Road Crew* concept to their constituents at the local level, local buy in from key stakeholders would have been very difficult.

The roles of statewide project team members were as follows:

*The Wisconsin Department of Transportation/Bureau of Transportation Safety (WisDOT/BOTS):* WisDOT Alcohol Program Manager Carol Karsten provided overall program oversight and project management. She was key in providing credibility for and championing the program among law enforcement and traffic safety officials at the local level.

*University of Wisconsin School of Business:* Emeritus Marketing Professor Michael Rothschild, the principal investigator for this project, oversaw all aspects of program research and provided all technical assistance related to social marketing.

*MasComm Associates, LLC:* Led by Beth Mastin, this national consulting firm specializing in media and community collaborations, provided ongoing consultation for and tracking of the community coalitions, working closely with both the state team and community coalitions.

*Miller Brewing Company:* This partner played a key role in the initiative's promotion efforts, providing funding for the initial version of the project's toolbox and development of the *Road Crew* brand and advertising efforts. Miller wholesalers serving project communities were encouraged to play an active role in the local coalitions.

*The Tavern League of Wisconsin:* The Tavern League was crucial in providing credibility to the local taverns and target market. Without their endorsement of the project, the taverns and target would not have heard the *Road Crew* message. In addition, a separate collaboration between WisDOT/BOTS and the Tavern League of Wisconsin, known as the ACT 109 Safe Ride program, allows local tavern leagues to subsidize rides home for bar patrons from funds they receive from a portion of every state OWI conviction. Under the leadership of Executive Director Chuck Taylor, the Tavern League of Wisconsin encouraged local leagues to develop ACT 109 programs in collaboration with the *Road Crew* effort.

## **PUBLIC/ PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

There is one fundamental quality that must be present for local initiatives to succeed long-term: the presence of highly supportive and committed community leadership in both the public and private sector.

All grant sites were advised to include representatives from the public and private sectors, including local government and law enforcement; business owners, specifically the proprietors of bars, alcohol beverage wholesalers and taxi services; public health organizations and associations; news media and advertising agencies, and the target group of 21-to-34-year-old men.

***Lesson Learned: It wasn't just 21-to-34-year-old men who needed to be targeted for these efforts to succeed. It was the entire community, each with its own personality and demographic.*** A maxim in community-based initiatives is that the community owns the problem and the solution. Another maxim is that no two communities are alike. The demographics of the community leaders involved in this effort were not that of typical grassroots organizations, led by public health activists and/or experienced community organizers. Rather, the success or failure of this effort rested on the buy-in and ownership of small town tavern owners and young single men. The challenge for the state program team was to meet these key players on their turf and find a common language to talk about how marketing techniques could be used to affect social behavior.

### **Role of Local Government**

A city or county government unit was required to act as the fiscal agent for this project. It functioned as a liaison between WisDOT/BOTS and the grant sites, approving local expenses and submitting them to the state for payment. At the program's final *Lessons Learned* meeting, community leaders identified the public/private partnership at the local level as one of the strengths of the program. They appreciated that while the seed money came from the government, the communities had the power to make decisions about what would work best operationally.

***Lesson Learned: Public/private partnership should have a liaison in place to help communities manage the sometime confusing interface between local government and communities.*** Coalitions found the process of submitting bills to the municipality, waiting for approval from city councils or town boards, and then waiting for payment from the state, to be cumbersome and confusing. BOTS regional program managers (RPM) were involved in planning the project, helping to identify communities to apply for grants, but lack of continuity due to retirement and other personnel matters complicated matters.

### **Role of Law Enforcement and Public Safety Personnel**

The endorsement and cooperation of local law enforcement, EMS personnel, and public health practitioners is important for two reasons. First, pragmatically, those who encounter drunken driving crashes on a regular basis understand the gravity of the problem and far-reaching consequences of such crashes. They can be among the strongest and most credible advocates within the local community for a new approach to reducing drunk driving. Second, like the target group, this group has real-life insights into what interventions will or won't work in their community. Often they can help to remove ordinance-related barriers that might stand in the way of the program.

Police, sheriff's departments, public health and transportation departments were active coalition members in all communities:

- In the Dodge-Point program, EMS volunteers were active in the coalition and law enforcement agents endorsed the effort.
- In Tomah, the police department was the lead agency in the initiative. The department agreed to waive parking tickets for cars left on the street or in municipal lots overnight if the vehicle owner

used the *Road Crew* program to get home. One scenario for the continuation of the Tomah program is for it to be administered by its Safe Community Coalition.

- In Manitowoc County, public health nurses were early champions of the program. The Sheriff's Department was the lead fiscal agency for the program.
- In Polk County, the County Board of Transportation received reports from *Party Barge* service, and planners and was highly supportive of their efforts.

### **Private Partners in the Coalition**

Having a broader community coalition in place to provide day-to-day support was vital in steering and operating community-based efforts. This broad coalition can come from many sources. Often major players come from those who have been personally affected by a past crash.

### **Role of Executive Leaders**

There was an on-going need for a person, or core group, to take key leadership positions as the chairperson of the board and/or executive committee.

Asking communities to launch and market *Road Crew* initiatives required both small business and marketing acumen. For two out of the three communities completing the project, the ride service was new and required organizers to put together a business plan. The result was that in the early months the nuts and bolts of launching a business took precedence over conceptualizing how to market the service. In the two most successful communities, this leadership came from experienced small business owners whose businesses directly or indirectly are impacted by alcohol-related crashes.

- In Dodge-Point, an auto body shop owner spearheaded the effort, quipping that some people might wonder why he would lead an effort that has the effect of reducing his business.
- In Polk County, three tavern owners shared executive duties. As holders of alcohol sales licenses, all three are committed to being responsible business owners and to the safety of their patrons

***Lesson Learned: Entrepreneurship and can-do attitude key to success.*** Because small business management is such a large piece of the picture, having a person with strong entrepreneurial skills on board is a huge asset. Key planners must have the confidence to press forward even with some uncertainty about how the projects will evolve.

- Acknowledge that this will be a complex, time-consuming facet of the project. .
- Seek leaders with knowledge of all aspects of small business management. This includes budgeting, program management and keeping accurate logs.
- Make sure someone is minding the important details, like proper insurance for vehicles and licensing for drivers.
- Seek a leader with proven experience in taking the calculated risks required for a business start-up.
- Program planners should provide templates, resources and guidance in launching a small business.

### **Role of Community Coordinators**

Grants provided up to \$22,500 for communities to hire part-time coordinators for up to 18 months. Community coordinators were expected to take on the myriad responsibilities associated with managing a

local initiative. The position required a range of skills, including: vision, creativity and passion for the job; ability to facilitate, promote and organize; administrative skills that include experience in record keeping, maintaining financial records and ride logs; and an understanding of nonprofit organizations. Each of the coordinators had some of these skills, but none had all.

All grant sites underestimated the amount of time required to manage the varied aspects of this position. Three of the four original coordinators juggled *Road Crew* responsibilities along with other part- or full-time work. Project management, coalition building, and the creative abilities necessary to raise the profile of the project are time-intensive work. As a result, burnout became a factor.

***Lesson Learned: Hire coordination with both the time and skills for the job.*** It should be made non-negotiable that those communities planning such a program hire at least one part-time employee.

- Applicants intending to maintain an additional full-time position should not be considered.
- As part of the interview, applicants should be asked to explain why the position will require at least 20 hours a week and how their time will be allocated.
- Applicant should be asked to explain what aspects of the position s/he feels least equipped to handle and how s/he might seek help in those areas.
- A key role of the broader coalition should be to support and complement the coordinator's skills. For instance, if the coordinator has no experience as a public speaker, a coalition member should assume the spokesperson role for the group.
- Coalition leadership should mind the advice to "never hire someone you can't fire," and be wary of close ties that could be perceived as a conflict of interest, nepotism, or favoritism. Hiring out of convenience rather than searching for the most qualified applicant can lead to larger problems later in the project.

While the grant program covered the costs to hire a coordinator, in pragmatic terms, the short turn-around time for hiring made it impossible for municipalities to post a job opening and meet mandated requirements for filling city or county positions. This meant that the only way for communities to hire coordinators was to seek individuals willing to work on a consultant or contractor basis.

- In Polk and Manitowoc Counties, local tavern leagues subcontracted with the municipalities and hired community coordinators as contractors to the league.
- In Tomah and Dodge-Point, coordinators contracted directly with the municipalities as self-employed consultants.

***Lesson Learned: Coordinators became independent contractors.*** Coordinators were unaccustomed to working as self-employed contractors and required a range of technical assistance in working through the details of their relationship between the municipality and the program. If planners had anticipated how the hiring of community coordinators would play out, more resources about hiring contractors could have been provided up-front. MasComm Associates, an experienced self-employed consultant, offered informal advice on topics ranging from writing a business plan, consultant contracts and tax implications for the self-employed

Start-up costs not covered by the grant included office space, equipment and furniture. Given the unlikelihood of a governmental unit hiring a new employee for a program such as this, those unrecoverable costs were also borne by the coordinator or local leaders. Planners should discuss how to bear these costs



for the coordinator, even when such costs are not directly borne by the state funding. For instance, local businesses could donate equipment and/or office space. .

### **Role of the 21-to-34-year-old Advisory Groups**

The importance of identifying the target market and then including representatives from that group in a planning team cannot be underestimated. There really is no substitute for listening to the target in designing and refining the product. Even the most experienced of planners knows much less than they imagine about what appeals to their target market. Target group members were instrumental in helping communities determine the type of service that would appeal to young males, including the hours of operation that would work best and techniques to persuade the target to try the service. This point was stressed at the planning conference. In the two grant sites that took this message to heart, both communities developed strong customer loyalty among target age bar patrons.

***Lesson Learned: The wisdom of the target is essential*** Bar owners from Polk County returned from the planning conference and immediately convened an advisory board of 21-to-34-year-old single men. How'd they do it and what'd they do?

- Based on their knowledge of their own customers, bar owners tapped the more influential and charismatic patrons to serve on the board. This strategy of getting taverns' alpha males vested in the program helped the *Party Barge* gain rapid acceptance among the tavern's regular patrons.
- The advisory group suggested limos as the mode of transportation.
- This informal group met several times to help refine plans, once meeting at 1 a.m. to see how they felt about the program plan after a night of drinking. *Additional lesson:* Meeting at 1 a.m. with a group of inebriated people is not especially useful.
- The program launched with advisors inviting friends to join them in riding for free to test the program. *Additional lesson:* Sampling is important. Gaining visibility via the opinion leaders is important.
- This group was also instrumental in providing feedback to bar and limousine owners on fares. The original fee structure was adapted when costs for unlimited rides appeared quite high compared to the cost of one-way rides. *Additional lesson:* Getting the right fare structure is important. If the fare is too high, demand will be minimized, but if fares are too low, sustainability will be difficult. Experimentation and adjustment of fares was done in two communities before the appropriate level was reached. While riders were willing to pay, having a price that was seen as too high had a strong impact on demand.

In Dodge-Point, an advisory group became the core from which volunteer drivers were drawn. One of the benefits of being a volunteer driver in Dodge-Point was that volunteers could ride free on their off nights. As a result, both riding and driving has become part of the social scene.

***Lesson Learned: Target perception of inclusion pays off in many ways.*** This service is for a specific target that is often excluded from community dialogue. Including them in the development and operation of the program led to stronger buy-in and cooperation. The riders became volunteer drivers and also acted as the sales force to bring in other riders. When the target realized this program was by them and for them, they embraced it more fully.

***Lesson Learned: Access to advisory groups was of value to the state project team, who met with them in conjunction with site visits.*** On each occasion, project staff gained direct and valuable insight into how the program operated. In one instance, staff learned that some riders were utilizing the ride

service to bar hop, but were then driving themselves home. Steps were made to correct this potentially serious situation that included strengthening the rules for purchasing one-way rides. Drivers now inform all riders that consenting to any ride with the program is consenting to accept a ride home at the end of the evening.

In another instance, feedback from the target group helped local organizers to see how low awareness was among the target and the misconceptions of how the program should work among bartenders and cab drivers. These individuals found that some patrons were using cabs to get home, but were unaware of both the service and vouchers. As a result, cab drivers began offering vouchers to all riders picked up at bars, not just to those who asked for vouchers. The organizers did not have members of the target as part of their advisory group to help shape their program. Recruiting such a group proved difficult for the project coordinator, an outsider to the demographic the program sought to serve.

### **Role of Alcohol Serving Industry**

Alcohol service industry participants included bars, taverns and restaurants, Miller wholesalers, and the Tavern League of Wisconsin. In all communities, local Miller wholesalers worked with community coordinators to provide promotional in-kind services, customizing and distributing local *Road Crew* posters in participating bars. The Tavern League of Wisconsin's endorsement of and involvement in the *Road Crew* project smoothed the way for local organizers to get bars on board in each community. The cooperation of local bars was also key in gathering research data.

In Polk and Manitowoc Counties, local leagues took the lead in organizing efforts, reimbursing rides home as part of the ACT 109 program. In all communities, bar owners, managers, bartenders, and wait staff were important in raising awareness, setting the campaign tone, influencing patrons, and providing incentives for trying the service. It was primarily the bartenders, in fact, who called *Road Crew* dispatchers to arrange for rides.

***Lesson Learned: Eventually all products are sold at the retail level.*** The bars were the *Road Crew* retailers, the bar staff the sales force. Their cooperation and diligence was vital.

In Polk County:

- There is a very high level of buy-in from the participating taverns. Bar owners' investment in the *Road Crew* program has contributed to its very livelihood. Quite literally, they bought into the program, securing a place on the *Party Barge* circuit by purchasing ride vouchers and then selling them to patrons. The program is housed at one of the bars.
- Under the auspices of the county tavern league, bars organized a Casino Night fundraiser, raising \$2,400 to support *Road Crew* services.
- All 34 bar owners participating in the program contributed \$35 each in order to provide the service for free to bar patrons on New Year's Eve. These free rides were great for community relations and provided a trial opportunity for future riders.

In Dodge-Point:

- There are plans to help sustain efforts with ACT 109 funding.

- The Dodger Bowl has become the meeting place for *Road Crew* meetings.
- Bartenders played a crucial role in this community in generating awareness, wearing *Road Crew* t-shirts emblazoned with the ride number in big, bold print and gave away business cards with the first drink purchased.

In Tomah:

- Both bartenders and cab drivers distributed ride vouchers to patrons.
- Bars were kept up to date on *Road Crew* activities via a monthly newsletter.
- Planners encouraged servers to actively promote the program with a monthly cash incentive to the server who distributed the most vouchers the previous month.

In Manitowoc County:

- The Tavern League located and hired a coordinator and worked diligently to reconcile the difficulties the county and community encountered.
- Several bars were involved in efforts to launch a shuttle service in October and November, hosting kick-off events.

### **Role of the Business Community**

Business involvement is important if efforts are to be sustained locally. *Road Crew* coalitions sought only modest involvement by business. Local businesses donated goods and services for *Road Crew* raffles and fundraisers, and coupons for video rentals and pizza to users of the ride service. Hotels in Polk County and Dodge-Point helped promote efforts by distributing flyers about the service to hotel guests.

***Lesson Learned: Road Crew research indicates high level of community support*** After their first successful year in operation, community coalitions are in a much stronger position to solicit higher levels of support. *Road Crew* research indicates that the services offered in these communities have likely prevented numerous alcohol-related crashes and that a high level of support exists amongst community leaders for continuing the ride service. Armed with this information, coalition leaders should be able to make a compelling case for the private sector providing major support for the programs.

All communities' sustainability plans call for higher levels of business support. These are community projects, not just a program for bars and their patrons. Everyone in the community benefits from safer roads, and all organizations and businesses should be solicited to become partners. There are many ways to assist, and there should be one found for every potential partner in this community effort. Given the success shown, future communities should be able to seek solicitation at the onset of the process. Dodge-Point provides an example of a community where a wide range of businesses contributed to the success of the program:

- Leading representatives from Lands' End, which employs a large number of the community's residents, attended the planning conference and company employees held prominent positions within the coalition. One volunteer, who trains Lands' End drivers, designed a training manual for *Road Crew* drivers, and the program was featured in the company's internal newspaper. Lands'

End also donated *Road Crew* t-shirts for volunteer drivers and provided the embroidery template for use by other grant recipients.

- Other Dodge-Point businesses involved in this effort included two insurance companies, which provided volunteers and technical assistance in insurance matters.
- A local gas station and insurance agency subsidized gas for *Road Crew* vehicles and a cable company subsidized the cost of creating a *Road Crew* television commercial, offering its production skills, facilities and equipment, and then following up with reduced rates and commercial placements.
- The Dodgeville Chamber of Commerce sold program vouchers, and agreed to be the non-profit pass-through for *Road Crew* fundraising efforts.
- The coalition leader in this effort was a body shop owner who donated his time and many of his business resources to the effort. He also underwrote the purchase of vehicles for the start-up.

## Technical Assistance

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*Road Crew* project staff fielded questions and provided technical assistance on a wide range of issues, from helping key players write business plans to trying to resolve partnership and collaboration issues. Site visits, phone calls, and daylong *Road Crew* conferences were primary components of the on-going technical assistance provided to communities.

***Lesson Learned: On-going communication and trouble-shooting was required in all of the communities.*** In the early days, state staff was called upon to provide technical assistance ranging from social marketing coaching to small business consultations and conflict resolution. Flexibility was required in determining who was best suited to manage emerging needs.

### **ROAD CREW CONFERENCES**

Four daylong conferences allowed representatives from grant sites to receive continuing training and technical assistance, as well as to meet, exchange ideas, and provide progress reports.

The first of these training conferences took place before communities submitted proposals. An invitation to attend the conference, entitled *Social Marketing: A New Approach to Addressing Alcohol-Related Crashes in Wisconsin*, provided an overview of the principals of social marketing and of the *Road Crew* model. Conference information was distributed to municipalities and county governments throughout Wisconsin. Communities with an expressed interest in trying new approaches to highway safety were contacted directly by RPMs. Fifteen communities attended and many came with fairly complete coalitions already in place.

In May 2003, approximately one month after proposals were selected, a second meeting took place. It focused on launching a new business and reviewed social marketing concepts in each community proposal. A third meeting took place in October 2002, which allowed communities to share stories about their launch and successes to date. As with the previous meeting, refining marketing plans was an integral

part of the day. The fourth event, in September 2003, included results of project research, final reports from communities, a press conference, and a celebration of the community's successes.

## **SITE VISITS**

Each community received periodic site visits from Michael Rothschild and Beth Mastin. Carol Karsten completed at least one site visit to each community. Site visits included meetings with community coalitions and with target age advisory groups. There were also meetings as requested either by the local community or the state staff to facilitate partnership conversations or assist in problem solving. There was a greater need for site visits than originally anticipated. At least three visits per site should take place: early in the project, at an interim stage, and late in the project. Each site visit should include meetings for coalition members and the target age advisory committees.

## **PHONE CONSULTATION**

Phone consultation was provided on an as needed basis. Community tracking took place primarily by regularly scheduled phone calls. In the early months of the program, local community coordinators checked-in with the state community coordinator on a bi-weekly basis. This frequent contact was important in helping communities shape projects and keep them on track.

## **TOOLBOX**

A toolbox was prepared as the primary resource for communities to use in fashioning their proposals and as an ongoing reference as they launched their programs. It has proven to be a most useful blueprint for the program, laying out the steps communities needed to launch their individual efforts. The toolbox has had substantial revisions over the past year based on the experience and input of the grantees. A revised version of the toolbox, assimilating lessons learned over the course of the demonstration project, is included in this report.

# **Social Marketing**

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Public health practitioners have recently discovered the promise of social marketing and now have attempted to utilize it to tackle drinking and driving. Often what emerges from such efforts is a new slogan designed to appeal to a target market that has already rejected the concept. However, if there is no perceived benefit, the target will persist in its old behavior. What social marketing asks is that communities understand why the target is not behaving in a desired way, then introduce a new product that the target will use because it meets their needs and desires. Only after that step has been taken can the social marketer begin to advertise and publicize the new product or the new behavior.

## **UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL MARKETING CONCEPTS**

On the surface, social marketing seems easy. Marketing rides should be as appealing as, say, ordering pizzas for a party. Like pizza, the ride alternative must be tasty, something one would enjoy sharing with friends. It must also be convenient, delivered to your door in 30 minutes or less. It must be offered in such a way that the barriers to purchase are minimal. And finally, it must be priced so that customers appreciate its value and buy it again. But marketing rides as fun, economical, and crowd pleasing required local organizers to think like marketers. This was more of a challenge than imagined. Developing a new product and brand, offering the right incentives, and launching the right promotion to create product identification and brand loyalty for a targeted group was sophisticated, nuanced work.

***Lesson Learned: The key to a successful partnership is drawn on the strengths of each partner to reach a shared goal.*** This project featured collaboration between expert outsiders with marketing

knowledge and skills and insiders who knew the communities' opportunities and constraints. Initially the state program team miscalculated the ability of communities to implement what they learned from the planning conference, toolbox, and one-on-one consultation. Social marketers should match expectations to skills and experience of those in the community, and work closely with the community to shape their ideas into well-conceived social marketing initiatives. Be prepared to revisit the social marketing concept in a variety of fresh ways.

Examples of appropriate roles for community members and marketing professionals include:

- **Community members:** Rely on the community coalition and advisors to define what will and won't appeal to members of the community. Don't allow outside expert hubris to influence the adoption of ideas that won't work in the community.
- **Marketing professionals:** Use information and insights developed in collaboration with the community to develop brand and positioning. Don't expect that communities can fully realize the creative demands of a market positioning. Provide them with the basic theme and tools and ask them to build it out with their own creative approach from there.

## **ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIAL MARKETING APPROACH**

Social marketing prescribes four elements for successful campaigns, including

- *Target Market:* Understanding who the focus of the effort is helps in designing a program specifically attuned to the needs and interests of the target.
- *Product/Brand Development:* Offer an alternative to the "product" the target is currently using. With drinking and driving, the current product may be described as "driving my own vehicle home regardless of the amount of alcohol consumed."
- *Incentives:* Offer a means to persuade someone to try a new product and then build repeat use. For example, offering a free sample to encourage an initial trial, then offer two-for-one coupons to build repeat usage.
- *Promotion:* Promotion is used to create identification with the product and build brand loyalty over time. A solid marketing and promotion plan will have messages that are specifically focused on appealing to the target market.

**Target Market:** Understanding and including the target in the product design are the first steps in social marketing. Before the program was begun, extensive focus group research was done with expert observers as well with the target to learn the benefits and barriers associated with driving impaired.

All *Road Crew* communities were required to include the target in the process. In the two communities that took this step to heart, the product now in use is widely accepted. Lessons learned about the importance of working with the target on an on-going basis are detailed in the community coalition narrative.

**Product/Brand Development:** Initially, the state program team thought that once participants understood social marketing principles they would be able to design appealing, creative campaigns that promoted their services. The belief was that by giving each community creative license, they would be more likely to take

pride in and promote their concepts. It was true that communities took ownership of their creative constructs, so much so that even when they were off point, communities found their ideas hard to part with. The initial reception to the *Road Crew* brand was tepid, each community clinging to a greater or lesser degree to their original concepts. The grant sites persisted in appending the new theme to their earlier ideas, except for Dodge-Point, which launched later and had not yet developed a campaign. A year after its adoption, one community was using the *Road Crew* theme consistently, but wasn't enthusiastic about the *Boxer Short Dave* posters.

***Lesson Learned: The statewide theme developed by creative experts, which resulted in a high quality brand, should have been developed before communities attempted to develop their own themes.*** *Road Crew*, a viable brand, is now in place. In the future, communities using this model would also be asked to use the *Road Crew* brand, to be customized with local incentive and promotion ideas. For other social marketers, the lesson from this demonstration project is to create the brand before handing it over to local communities for customization.

- With funding from the Miller Brewing Company, *Road Crew* staff hired a marketing firm to come up with the now adopted *Road Crew* logo and theme. The results are the “*Road Crew, Beats Driving*” logo and slogan which conveys the “no hassle” theme of fun and convenience. The accompanying *Boxer Short Dave* posters won a local Addy.
- In reversing the earlier intention to allow communities creative license, staff reasoned that it would be easier for communities to proceed with promotion using a well-thought out theme. By developing a consistent approach, communities could be provided with posters, logos and ideas for local customization.

### **Community Product Development and Branding Ideas – One Hit, Two Misses**

**The Hit:** One of the communities succeeded in developing the ideal concept and complementary program name. In Polk County, where bar hopping while drinking is the norm, the coalition and advisory group devised a program with a night of limousine service to predetermined destinations, including a ride home, and dubbed the service the *Party Barge*. While *Road Crew* staff lauded the genius of this campaign, opponents pointed to the concept as problematic because it appeared to endorse over-consumption. For the other, more conservative grantees, the *Party Barge* image was over the top and rejected.

**Two Misses:** For the two communities with existing cab services, starting a new community service as part of an existing service introduced positioning challenges. The question for them was how to appeal to their target and override the ingrained image of the staggering drunk forced to take a cab home. This required community leaders to pay particular attention to theme and product that featured rides home as a fun and affordable alternative to driving oneself home.

In one of the communities promoting cab service, the program coordinators adapted an existing marketing concept parallel to MasterCard's “priceless” campaign. The idea was that the cost of taking a cab was “priceless” relative to the cost of an OWI. Leaving aside issues of copyright infringement, the approach demonstrated that the community did not fully grasp social marketing concepts. Focusing on OWI convictions, shaming, and sending fear-based messages aren't the best approach to encourage the target to try something new. It also put state staff in the position of advising them against pursuing what they believed to be a clever idea. A second slogan, “Take a Cab on Our Tab,” was not much of an improvement, as it lacked the punch that staff had hoped for.

In the second community with an existing cab service, the entrepreneurial interests for the cab owner in promoting his service created problems. The proprietor's service, Sunshine Cabs, wanted the project theme to play off themes he had used to promote his business. Community organizers, on the other hand, wanted to distance themselves from his business and business practices. This community never resolved this and other issues, and eventually disbanded.

**Incentives:** The toolbox instructed communities that members of the target market would go through several stages between knowing nothing at all about the new service to becoming loyal users of said service. These stages include awareness, attitude, trial behavior, and repeat behavior. Incentives are used to get trial usage and customer loyalty is enhanced with continued use of incentives.

**Lesson Learned: Understanding how incentives work doesn't mean that coalitions understand what would make a good incentive.** As with branding, communities grasped the broad concept of using incentives, but were less adept in devising an incentive strategy. Community leaders understood the value of incentives for product introduction. All programs included coupons for pizza and/or other services that would entice patrons to try the ride service in their promotion efforts. Polk County experimented with two-for-one ride promotions and instituted a frequent rider program. However, coalitions were less consistent in recognizing the value of continuing to offer incentives as the program progressed, reporting that they didn't see a correlation between promotion and ridership after the initial program launch.

While no community launched with a well-integrated incentive strategy, over time communities working closely with advisory groups gained insights into what seemed to work best in attracting new riders and building customer loyalty. Communities learned that the best incentives are the real features of the product that are integral to the service.

- In Polk County, "party bargers" seem to agree that chauffer-driven bar hopping and cruising in the limos is an evening of fun in and of itself.
- In Dodge-Point, the reciprocal agreement that volunteer drivers ride free on their night off has become a popular incentive to both recruit drivers and build customer loyalty.

**Promotion:** In a media-saturated, brand-driven culture, all grant sites understood the necessity of promoting the *Road Crew* product at a place and time where the target could respond to it. At a minimum, this translated to distributing *Road Crew* posters to bars.

Once the *Road Crew* logos and *Boxer Short Dave* images were developed, poster and logo templates were provided to communities for customization. Miller distributors played a key role in helping communities customize posters for in-bar use. Customization focused on printing local details, such as hours of service, cost and dispatch numbers, on posters, flyers, and newspaper ads. Details of *Road Crew* promotion efforts, including local press coverage, purchased print and cable ads, and use of in-bar promotions and giveaways, can be found in the community overview section of this report.



***The Bartender as Promoter:*** Large and small *Road Crew* posters hung in every bar, on the walls and in the toilet stalls. But bars that attract the target are visually distracting and noisy places. In some bars, dozens of other splashy posters obscured *Road Crew* signage. Bartenders and servers promoted the project's efforts by acting as the *Road Crew* sales force, telling patrons about the program, encouraging them to use it, dispensing ride vouchers, and dispatching the ride service.

***Lesson Learned: A sales force that doesn't know or promote the product won't sell the service.***

There was a large variance from bar to bar and from community to community in how much individual servers were aware of and promoted the *Road Crew* service. Local planners must have a plan to continuously keep servers aware of and enthusiastic about the program. These people are busy, and may need their own set of incentives in order to assist.

***Use of Local Media:*** All communities attracted local print coverage, featuring both the launch and progress of their efforts. One community received unanticipated coverage when a drunk driver collided with a limousine associated with the *Road Crew* campaign. In Tomah, a newspaper reporter was a member of the coalition. Three of the four original grant sites purchased print ads, and one used a television commercial.

***Lesson Learned: Working with local cable companies provided a way to localize messages.*** Because the grant recipients were relatively small communities, they did not have much local radio or television coverage, as many of the media outlets are housed in nearby larger towns and/or cities. Hence, advertising on these vehicles was ineffective for several reasons, including the higher cost to buy time in larger markets with the message reaching consumers outside of the service area.

The Dodge-Point *Road Crew*, in collaboration with Charter Communications, produced an ad that ran in their communities. Cable providers often have the ability to run materials in very localized markets. In this case, Charter Communications ran the commercial in Dodgeville and surrounding towns, without running it in its larger operating area.

- The community worked closely with staff to ensure the commercial was consistent with the *Road Crew* brand and theme.
- A very reasonably priced package rate for the ads allowed the *Road Crew* to place ads on appropriate programs (such as Friday and Saturday ESPN games) appealing to bar crowds. Unlike PSAs, which run at less than optimal times and in random programming, these spots aired on channels likely to be viewed in bars.

## **The Product: Launching a Ride Service**

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The first toolbox, developed in early 2002 to assist communities in planning transportation options, suggested an array of transportation possibilities. These include buses, vans, cab service, and ride programs in which volunteer drivers use their own vehicles. Manitowoc County envisioned providing bus service to and from local summer festivals and special events, while Dodge-Point originally planned to offer rides in vans. In the end, one community used an existing cab service and the other two launched limousine services.

While other small communities might develop *Road Crew* services that puts vans or charter buses into service, this narrative focuses on the two transportation options developed in this project: taxis and limousines. If a community is going to consider using vans or buses, they should consider the issues that made limos successful and then try to adapt these features to the van or bus service.

## LIMOUSINES

*Road Crew* state program planners believe that this demonstration project has developed a replicable model for improving highway safety that can be rolled out in any small town in the United States. The model is one of communities investing in used luxury cars to provide a fun, safe, and affordable way to transport bar patrons to, from, and between bars, taking the hassle out of a night on the town.

***Lesson Learned: Limousines were the key to target acceptance of Road Crew services.*** This pioneering social marketing initiative, which may lead to lasting behavioral change, is built on the “Eureka!” moment when 21-to-34-year-old bar patrons in Polk County envisioned the “party barge.” That breakthrough contains important social marketing lessons to be used by future transportation safety specialists, public health workers, and social marketers.

- These vehicles functioned as the programs’ own best advertisement.
- Riding in a luxury vehicle was a major incentive for the target to use the program, with groups looking forward to the limo ride as part of the evening’s entertainment.
- Perhaps most importantly, this novel and upscale mode of transportation overcame the resistance the target felt towards many of the other alternatives.

## Running a Limousine Business

The good news is that a limousine service provides a fun, safe, and affordable way to transport bar patrons to, from and between bars, taking the hassle out of a night on the town. The bad news is that in order to offer this service, most communities will need to start a new business.

While a community might have a limousine service already in place, the same cautions that apply to working with an existing taxi services applies to working with an existing limo service. Some additional concerns specific to existing limo services are that since such services cater to upscale special events, much of their business takes place at nights and on weekends, prime time for the *Road Crew*. This internal competition may make an existing limo service untenable unless a carefully defined agreement is created in advance.

Planners will have to wade through the details of launching a new business and incur substantial start-up costs. In the *Road Crew* project, most of the start-up costs were initially borne by program leaders. With research now in place that demonstrates the efficacy of such programs in reducing alcohol-related crashes, it might be easier for new communities to secure community support for vehicle purchase and maintenance. Some initial business considerations include:

- Purchasing limos
- Maintaining the limos
- Obtaining affordable insurance
- Determining whether service will rely on hired chauffeurs or volunteer drivers
- Recruiting, training, scheduling, and retaining drivers

### **Purchasing and Leasing Vehicles**

Due to stipulations for allowable and unallowable expenses in this project, which were consistent with other state government funded community efforts, the high start-up costs associated with this project underscored the enormous goodwill and commitment of the two communities offering limousine service. Although attempts have been made to get a profit and loss analysis of the vehicle costs to the owners that would factor in purchase costs and on-going expenses against the lease income, all limo owners are a little vague about the bottom-line. All owners agree that they are not yet breaking even on their investment in the program.

- All eight of the luxury vehicles – now in service, four in each community – were purchased by small business owners who fronted the money and then leased the vehicles back to the program. If the average cost per vehicle was \$12,000, that equals \$48,000 ventured by each community. This amount exceeds the total funding provided by the state to launch these efforts.
- Several limos were purchased at a used limo auction.
- Limousine owners lease the vehicles to the programs on a per night basis, a cost that is an allowable expense of the programs. All owners envisioned subsidizing their costs by leasing vehicles to private parties when the limos were not in use. While there have been a few such opportunities, for the most part, the demand has conflicted with the programs' needs and hours of operation. Each program has set its own leasing structure.
- In Dodgeville, the lease only covers the vehicle and maintenance. As a volunteer run service, the municipality covers insurance and vehicles are returned to the owner's lot at the end of each shift with a full tank of gas. The gas is paid for through contributions of a local insurance company.
- In Polk County, the cost to lease vehicles includes insurance, payroll, maintenance, and gas. Insofar as both gas and maintenance costs exceeded estimates, covering these costs as part of the lease structure has added to the unpredictability of the cost of limos.

### **Limo Maintenance**

An unanticipated problem faced by communities offering limousine services was the high costs associated with maintenance.

- Older model limousines require high maintenance, and even minor repairs may require custom parts at higher than average costs.
- Vehicle maintenance ran several hundred dollars per automobile per month. In the Dodge-Point program, estimates for its four-vehicle fleet ran \$600 per month.
- Additional costs incurred include low miles per gallon associated with these vehicles; the high number of miles logged each night, and the increasing cost of gasoline.

***Lesson Learned: Older, used limousines are relatively inexpensive to purchase, but communities may be better off investing in newer, lower mileage vehicles.*** The initial cost will be more than offset by the lower maintenance costs of vehicles racking up highway miles and subject to heavy wear and tear

transporting revelers from town to town. Regular maintenance should be scheduled and drivers should keep a daily checklist of maintenance needs. An option for keeping gas costs down would be to have gas donated by local businesses.

### **Obtaining Affordable Insurance**

Determining how programs will be insured required research and resourcefulness on the part of the two communities offering limo services. Polk County estimates that insurance cost about \$1,800 per vehicle per year. The Dodge-Point *Road Crew's* insurance costs were borne by the municipality as part of its rider for municipal vehicles. This option is only possible because drivers are volunteers.

A concern raised on numerous occasions is the potential personal liability that volunteers might face as drivers. The state planners continue to work with the Wisconsin state legislature to establish a "Good Samaritan Law," which would insulate volunteers from liability claims. Each state will have different laws on this issue. While no crashes have yet occurred, it is inevitable that a crash eventually will happen and volunteers need to be protected. Each community and state needs to be cognizant of this issue and look for an appropriate solution.

### **Hired or Volunteer Drivers**

This project featured one program staffed by paid drivers and the other staffed by volunteers. There are pros and cons to each approach. Here are some of the considerations involved in each option:

Volunteer Option. Dodge-Point utilizes a core of 80 volunteer drivers:

- With no payroll, volunteer programs are much less costly than hiring chauffeurs.
- A volunteer-staffed program may be carried by the municipality's insurance, which keeps costs down and provides thorough coverage.
- Recruiting, training, scheduling, and motivating volunteers is ongoing and a time-consuming process.
- Most volunteers come from the set of people who are the regular users of the service. This system of using riders as drivers sets up camaraderie in the community, which enhances ridership. The members of the target are looking out for one another.
- Tips provide some monetary incentive to volunteers, who report making from \$20 to over \$100 a night.
- Volunteers are allowed to ride for free on nights when they need rides.
- With 80 volunteers, the Dodge-Point program has drivers scheduled up to two months in advance.

Paid Driver Option. Polk County hired drivers:

- A core group of 10 drivers have a regular schedule and earn a regular paycheck.
- Scheduling is easy.

- Payroll drives up overhead and increases employee-related record keeping.
- Running a program with professional drivers means that the municipality cannot cover insurance. This ran approximately \$1800 per vehicle annually.

### **Recruiting, Training and Retaining Drivers**

Drivers were responsible for a large measure of the success of this program, and, along with bartenders, were a key part of the *Road Crew* sales force. They kept long hours on shifts that ran into the wee hours of the morning, safely piloting their vehicles over the rural roads of Wisconsin. By the end of the first year, many patrons looked forward to a ride with their favorite driver. In both communities, camaraderie developed among drivers. In Polk County, the dispatcher's office became the driver's clubhouse. In Dodge-Point, drivers looked forward to being *Road Crew* patrons on their nights off.

### ***Lesson Learned: Points to remember in managing this part of the sales force:***

- Whether with paid chauffeurs or volunteers, staff vehicles with pleasant, nonjudgmental drivers to help patrons feel comfortable. Keep in mind that the goal of the program is to increase highway safety. Lectures or written materials about drinking too much will turn off riders and push them back to their own vehicles. When the limo drivers are also the limo users, there is less chance of judgmental behavior occurring.
- Establishing driver's guidelines and providing them with some training helped programs run smoothly.
- Prepare drivers to manage the potentially unpredictable behavior of patrons who had over-indulged, while maintaining order and safety.
- To maintain goodwill and show appreciation for the drivers and other volunteers, grant sites hosted picnics and holiday parties, and encouraged tipping by placing obvious signage in the vehicles.

### **Setting Fares**

Fare structures were changed several times over the course of the year. Polk County began with a pricing system that included one fare for the entire night (\$20); a segment fare (\$3); and a fare for rides home (\$5). The \$20 fare was arrived at in collaboration with the target, but upon initiation of the service, it was clear that \$20 was more than the target was willing to pay. Dodge-Point offered unlimited rides within the core service area for \$5. The program subsidizes much of the costs, essentially providing free rides to drinking venues and charging \$5 for the ride home. Dodge-Point has no geographic restrictions, but does add a surcharge of up to \$10 for rides outside a predetermined zone.

### ***Lesson Learned: Pricing***

- In Polk County, reducing the price (\$15) for an evening of service greatly increased service use. Patrons could still purchase single rides (\$4), including a ride home.
- While there is a fare for a ride home, anyone, regardless of ability or willingness to pay, will be given a ride home.

- Those purchasing an evening of service tend to be more likely to use the service for transportation to and from their homes. These patrons are also more likely to ride in groups. A key strategy is to get drinkers to preplan their rides and leave their vehicles at home. This is more likely to happen when friends travel in a group and preplan the evening.
- Dodge-Point drivers are often times told by members of the target that the fare is too low. As a result, with the need for the program to sustain itself, fares will likely increase.
- The ability to offer such low fares in the first year likely acted as an incentive for the target to try the service and build customer loyalty that will help to support its future.
- Research has shown that 75% of potential patrons would pay \$10 for a full evening of rides.

### **Dispatching, Scheduling, and Routes**

Dispatchers and schedulers learned to adapt to the ebb and flow of the program over the course of the year. Here are some lessons learned on dispatching and scheduling drivers:

- There is greater demand for Saturday night service than for Friday night. Speculation attributes this to the TGIF factor. Bar crowds gather more spontaneously Friday night, whereas Saturday night activities involve more planning. Fewer ride service vehicles are required on Friday nights.
- Managing bar time is the biggest challenge. Patrons do not want to wait for a ride home.
- On Saturday nights, two shifts could be scheduled: the earlier shift might be one or two vehicles; after 10 p.m., more vehicles can be dispatched to handle increased demand.
- Two shifts helps to avoid driver burnout.
- Dispatching can be done from one central point, as was the case in Polk County, or by providing drivers with cell phones/and or two-way radios. Either way, a system needs to be in place so that the closest driver on the route can respond to the call.
- Beware of overextending the *Road Crew* range. When vehicles cover too much distance, riders wait too long for pick-ups and may elect to drive their own vehicles home.

### **TAXIS**

The major advantages of working with an existing cab service to launch a program include:

- A simple voucher system may be all that is required administratively to launch the service.
- No need to organize how to staff vehicles and dispatch rides.
- No startup costs related to purchasing vehicles.

***Lesson Learned: Taxi services introduce some difficult marketing challenges.*** In the two communities offering cab services, there were organizational concerns that impacted the programs. This made it difficult to weigh how a cab service might work in other communities. However, there are some

inherent challenges to offering cabs as a transportation service. Here are some factors to consider when implementing a taxi-based program:

- **Service Differentiation.** Planners would need to reinvent a new service that could be differentiated from the existing services while running both services on the same platform. Imagine marketing the same taxi that takes little old ladies to an evening movie at a different fare than the same cab would charge to take a bar patron to a drinking establishment.
- **Collaboration with an existing taxi company.** Any community contemplating utilizing an existing cab service should carefully weigh the level of enthusiasm, reliability, flexibility, and willingness of the cab company to adapt its routine service to the specialized needs of the program.
- **Beware of cab stigma.** The target has described taxis as a dreary and demeaning alternative to driving their own vehicles, associated in their minds with hauling staggering drunk patrons home. For a cab to be a viable *Road Crew* alternative, it needs to pass the *Boxer Shorts Dave* brand test of providing a fun, affordable, hassle-free means to get to and from the bar. Cab services tend to be more utilitarian than fun.

## Funding and Sustainability

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### FUNDING

Communities were eligible to receive up to \$37,500 under the terms of the WisDOT/BOTS grant to cover expenses for up to 18 months. Unspent funds from the aborted Manitowoc County efforts were allocated to the remaining grant recipients. Dodge-Point and Polk County received additional grants of \$10,750 each to help sustain their efforts and help defray the higher-than-expected costs that were incurred to maintain the vehicles. Tomah, while eligible, did not apply for additional funding. This increased the total grant amount for Dodge-Point and Polk County to \$48,250.

Funding was used for ride reimbursement, promotion and advertising, leasing vehicles, office supplies, phone and equipment, liability insurance, and community coordinator salaries. Monies were not used for office equipment and furnishings, or for the purchase of vehicles.

**Unanticipated Expenses:** Administrative and operating expenses for running the program were underestimated by grant sites. Vehicle expenses were higher than anticipated for the limousine service, including gas and maintenance costs. The community coordinators for both the Tomah and Dodge-Point projects found it necessary to hire a member of the target group to assist with program promotion. In both instances, the coordinator directly bore the costs of this additional staff.

***Lesson Learned: Community Funding matched state grant dollars.*** Nowhere in this model is the necessity of having a public/private partnership more clearly illustrated than in taking a look at these programs' balance sheets for the first year of operation. The public money seeded the efforts, but there was almost a 100% (nongovernmental) community match in the two most successful communities. Without leaders willing to purchase limousines, these programs would not have been possible.

### SUSTAINABILITY

This project and the accompanying research illuminate the almost unimaginable success of devising a system for reducing the number of alcohol-related crashes caused by 21-to-34-year-old men. Both Dodge-Point and Polk County will continue providing services under the *Road Crew* banner; Tomah may continue to offer reduced fare rides, but will not use a social marketing model.

It is the strong recommendation of the state program team that the next step is for coalitions to shape their good works into direct appeals to major businesses and foundations, as well as to individuals. Armed with strong results to substantiate their experience and an understanding about how to use the *Road Crew* brand, these communities have compelling success stories to tell that can become strong sales pitches.

*Road Crew* research will be a tremendous asset in shaping localized appeals for funding. The research should lay to rest some of the concerns that coalitions might have encountered had they taken on aggressive fundraising in the start-up phase of their businesses.

The findings show that most people in the community know of and approve of the *Road Crew* effort:

- Awareness in the general community was 68%; it ranged from 70-100% in the other groups.
- Among those aware of the project, over 80% had positive feelings about the project, while nearly half of those aware perceived a decrease in driving after excessive drinking in the community.
- Community leaders felt that the programs should continue into the future.

The findings also show that the program is cost effective and increases highway safety:

- It is estimated that the almost 20,000 rides prevented 15 alcohol-related crashes on area roads during the one-year study, for a 17% reduction from a more typical year. (See the discussion section at the end of this report for detailed justification.)
- The average cost of an alcohol related crash in Wisconsin is about \$56,000; the cost to avoid a crash in this program was about \$15,300. (See the discussion section.)
- Among bar patrons, there was no observable increase in consumption compared to control communities.

### **Additional Components in Communities' Sustainability Plans**

At the final *Lessons Learned* meeting, each community was asked to detail its plans for sustainability. A summary of community plans can be found in the accompanying community overviews

- Dodge-Point plans to cover the difference between income from fares and operating costs with a variety of fundraisers and will likely increase service fares.
- Polk County will begin charging taverns an annual membership fee for participation in the *Party Barge* and will explore hosting at least one fundraiser per year.
- Tomah is considering having the local Safe Community Coalition take over program management. Activating the county Tavern League in the ACT 109 Safe Ride program may be the key to funding this transition.



### **Incorporation as Nonprofit Organizations**

Polk County and Dodge-Point are beginning to transition their projects from local government sponsored programs to self-sustaining, incorporated nonprofit organizations able to accept tax-exempt donations from the community. Polk County has begun this process by filing paperwork to incorporate the Polk County Tavern League, which will administer the *Party Barge*. Dodge-Point has taken the interim step of reaching an agreement with the Dodgeville Chamber of Commerce to act as a pass-through for *Road Crew* fundraising until it can complete the process of incorporation.

### **Events-Oriented Fundraising**

There are a countless number of ways to take on events-oriented fundraising. Events are fun, build camaraderie among volunteers and planners, and raise awareness of *Road Crew*. Casino Nights, raffles and golf outings have already raised thousands of dollars for Dodge-Point and Polk County. The downside of these events is that they can be time-consuming and include high overhead. Facility fees, t-shirt costs, and time and energy to solicit donations for raffles must be factored into the bottom line. Often the same amount of time and effort directed toward major givers can yield larger results. Communities should be encouraged to continue these efforts for the goodwill they generate, but should also consider direct donations as a substantial means of fundraising.

### **Role of State Partners in Sustaining Efforts**

The Tavern League of Wisconsin may be able to play a significant role in subsidizing rides in both Tomah and Dodge-Point. Both communities are eligible to apply for matching grants for rides home from ACT 109 funds.

Miller distributors will likely continue their in-kind efforts, supplying bars with new *Road Crew* posters, banners, and other promotional materials. At the September 2003 *Lessons Learned* conference, grant recipients learned that Miller Brewing Company may match a distributor's in-kind costs for promotional materials with direct grants to the community programs. Community coordinators were advised to contact distributors in order to take advantage of this funding opportunity.

## **Looking To the Future**

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### **EXPANDING AND CHANGING THE PROGRAMS**

All communities are adapting to growth in the programs and to the change from publicly funded to privately funded efforts.

*Expanding the Range of Service:* Both the Dodge-Point *Road Crew* and the Polk County *Party Barge* have grown into countywide services. The Dodge-Point service, rapidly extending into Iowa County, could also expand into adjacent counties. In the past two months alone, the service has added coverage to several additional outlying communities. The original planners see these services as operating a bit like a franchise, with other communities operating under the *Road Crew* banner and shuttling bar patrons more efficiently over a greater geographical area. To launch these new services, Dodge-Point coordinators will provide pro-bono consulting services. They envision these new service providers as self-contained, with new communities purchasing and staffing their own vehicles. Planners are hopeful that the outstanding level of endorsement they enjoyed by county leaders, such as Iowa County Circuit Judge William Dyke, will help them to migrate their program's insurance coverage from the City of Dodgeville to Iowa County.

Polk County's ride circuit has grown from 20 taverns to 40, with demand for a more extended circuit throughout the county. Planners note that they already cover a 400 square mile range with existing services, and look to other tavern owners to sustain the start-up costs to extend the range of the service.

*Shifting Coordinators' Roles:* In addition to new fundraising strategies, each community has plans to change program administration.

- Polk County has instated new coordinators with revised responsibilities. With less record keeping required without grant-related research, Polk County's efforts will continue with only a paid dispatcher. Other administrative duties will be covered by Tavern League members.
- In Dodge-Point, a 20-hour per week position will focus on scheduling volunteer drivers. The coordinator who led the effort in the first year will continue her leadership at the coalition level and work on a voluntary basis, consulting on how to expand the program into new communities.
- In Tomah, it is likely that subsidized cab service will become a project of the existing Safe Community Coalition.

## **REPLICATING THE MODEL**

Successes in three demonstration communities are a testament to what can be accomplished with strong community-based leadership, public support and technical assistance. State planners are confident that by coupling research results with the lessons learned at the local level, the *Road Crew* model can be replicated in small towns across America.

What is required at the local level is a strong leadership, a broad coalition of stakeholders and inclusion of the target group in decision-making. Equally important is the commitment of time, entrepreneurial know-how, and matching community funding to cover costs not eligible for state funding. Technical assistance in social marketing and community problem solving is required to help coalitions customize the model to match the unique characteristics of each community. With these components in place, the *Road Crew* could become a breakthrough model for increasing highway safety in America.